

# Self-Surrender and Self-Will

LECTURES ON THE RELIGIOUS LIFE

DELIVERED BY B. W. RANDOLPH, D.D.

TRINITY COLLEGE LIBRARY



3 1761 04143 8466

BV  
4518  
S44  
1913  
TRIN



FROM THE LIBRARY OF  
TRINITY COLLEGE  
TORONTO

*The Gift of  
The Friends of the Library*



# ender and Will

the Religious Life,  
Community of Sisters

E BY THE REV.

OLPH, D.D.

*len of the Community of  
rgin, Wantage*

SELF-SURRENDER

JL 2 5 1995



& CO. LTD.  
et, Oxford Circus, W.  
igh Street  
YOUNG CHURCHMAN CO.





FROM THE LIBRARY OF  
TRINITY COLLEGE  
TORONTO

*The Gift of*  
*The Friends of*



# Self=Surrender and Self=Will

Being Addresses on the Religious Life,  
given to a Community of Sisters

WITH A PREFACE BY THE REV.

B. W. RANDOLPH, D.D.

*Canon of Ely, and Warden of the Community of  
S. Mary the Virgin, Wantage*

JUL 2 5 1995

A. R. MOWBRAY & CO. LTD.

LONDON : 28 Margaret Street, Oxford Circus, W.

OXFORD : 9 High Street

MILWAUKEE, U.S.A. : THE YOUNG CHURCHMAN CO.

First impression, 1913



## PREFACE

---

IT is a bold thing for one who is not a Religious to add a Preface to a book like this, but I have been asked to write a few words of commendation, and I do not like to refuse.

I do not like to refuse, because these short addresses seem to me to be quite excellently adapted for reading or meditation in Religious Houses.

It is evident that the writer has thought long and deeply about the meaning of self-surrender, and he knows how hardly self-will dies in us all.

"It is so easy for us to be heroic, if only we are recognized as heroes and heroines. To give up comforts and reputation, if only we get some sympathy and credit for it. To do humble tasks proudly, while we let people know that we are capable of better things. To yield up our will in trivial details which do not touch us closely, if only we may do our own

will in matters which are dear to us. All this is so easy ; but it is not self-surrender. It is self-will ; but it is not self-surrender."

. . . . .

It is this kind of sentence (and there are not a few in this little book) which we may ponder again and again, and never without profit.

B. W. RANDOLPH.

THE ALMONRY, ELY.

*Feast of the Transfiguration,*  
1913.



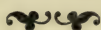
# CONTENTS

---

ADDRESS	PAGE
I. LOVE—THE FOUNDATION OF THE RELIGIOUS LIFE - -	I
II. SELF-SURRENDER—PERSONAL RE- SPONSE TO LOVE - -	9
III. SELF-SURRENDER—THE PRINCIPLE OF THE INCARNATION - -	14
IV. SELF-WILL — THE REJECTION OF LOVE - - - -	22
V. CORRECTION OF WILL—RECOVERY OF FREEDOM - -	29
VI. KNOWLEDGE OF GOD—THE KEY TO SELF-KNOWLEDGE - -	37
VII. PENITENCE — THE RESULT OF KNOWLEDGE - - -	46
VIII. THE ESTABLISHING OF THE WILL— STAGES OF GROWTH - -	52
IX. THE NEED OF THE AGE—PER- SONAL WITNESS - -	61



# Self=Surrender and Self=Will



*Address I*

Love

The Foundation of the Religious Life

DEAR SISTERS IN CHRIST,

1. Many who have embraced the Religious Life have found it full of difficulties and dangers, of which they little dreamed when they first heard and obeyed the Call of GOD to serve Him in the holy ways of the Counsels and the Vows.

Some difficulties there must needs be; but the gravest are due in many cases to having sought the Life of the Cloister from some personal motives, which, while not wrong in themselves, are based on self and not on GOD.

It is quite possible for really devout souls to enter into Holy Religion from such motives



## 2 SELF-SURRENDER AND SELF-WILL

as a desire for seclusion: from a wish for association with others who are likeminded: to enjoy a certain comely simplicity of life: to be protected by order and rule: to enjoy fuller religious privileges than they would in the world: to engage in religious work with the prestige that a Community gives: to shelter in security against the dangers encountered in secular life: or to find greater opportunity for prayer and communion.

But all these are *motives* which come from within, from self—though they have their Godward side.

2. The only real *foundation* of the Religious Life which is deep and strong and abiding is the love of GOD for us, and our responsive love for Him.

Built upon this *foundation* the fabric of the Religious Life stands firm, and the difficulties and dangers are minimized. Built on the *motives* which proceed from self there is always a danger of collapse, and the difficulties are increased.

Seeing Him Who is altogether lovely, and yielding to Him the entire nature in response to His voice calling and claiming the heart and life—that is the very essence of Holy Religion. "The love of CHRIST constraineth us." All other motives are subsidiary. However excellent and worthy of respect and consideration they may be, all these are but motives proceeding from self, and must

be brought into due subordination, and be regulated according to the primary principle of Religious Life, which is the love of GOD for us, and our responsive love to Him.

Anything which takes the place of love is out of order. Anything which is withheld weakens the foundation, and endangers the life, growth, and peace of the Consecrated Life. Love is less than love unless it is supreme. Obedience, poverty, chastity are nothing unless they are founded on love.

3. On love, then, the Religious Life is based: on love it is built up: by love it coheres: by love it is completed.

(1) SECLUSION. The desire for seclusion is keenly felt by some souls. The activities of the world distract them, and they seek some quiet resting-place apart, where they may be still and undisturbed. And they carry self with them.

But if the soul desires seclusion for love of GOD it gives opportunity for contemplation, and development of the highest faculties of the being in the service of the Beloved.

(2) ASSOCIATION. Another motive which may proceed from self-gratification is the natural wish for association with others in aims which are common to all. There is something invigorating in co-operation, yet it may be nothing more than an ungracious and graceless spirit of exclusiveness which is contemptuous of others who are outside.

## 4 SELF-SURRENDER AND SELF-WILL

But love for GOD vivifies a Community in its common unity of dedication to Him in Whom their souls find rest, Whose love covers His whole creation.

(3) SIMPLICITY. Others may be attracted by the simplicity of life and food and garb, yet this very simplicity may be to them only another form of aestheticism. Quiet movement, plain fare, the "habit" have an artistic value greater to many than the luxury of colour and display.

But, in the light of love for GOD, the life of simplicity and severity is the spontaneous expression of sympathy with Him Who had not "where to lay His head."

(4) ORDER. Some are inert, and dislike the burden of personal responsibilities, and find the annoyances of domestic life irksome; so to escape these they place themselves under a common rule of life, where order is maintained for them.

But in love this common order and rule is raised to a higher plane than that of mere convenience; and the soul finds union with Him Who is, in His nature, in His repose, and in His activities, the centre and source of order.

(5) PRIVILEGES. The Cloister offers many religious privileges far in excess of those to be found in the secular life, yet these may be sought with the mere idea of saving one's soul.



But to one who is drawn by the love of GOD in this, as in all other matters, He is first, and His honour and glory is the aim of all spiritual development.

(6) WORK. A person of unwearied activity may be engrossed in religious work—in the penitentiary, the hospital, the parish.

But this work may have but little of grace unless it springs from personal, continuous, devoted service to Him and with and for Him Who “came not to be ministered unto, but to minister,” because He loved; Who would not allow even any of His gracious works of love and pity to minister to Himself and gratify Himself.

(7) SECURITY. So, too, the peace and security of the Cloister through the absence of external anxieties, friction with the world, its dangers, and its attractions, will not be gained, but imperilled if there is not love.

With love security is blessed and made fruitful, as setting the Religious free to serve Him Who is perfect peace.

(8) COMMUNION. Even the highest blessings—prayer to GOD and communion with Him—may be robbed of their exceeding blessing and joy unless love bids the soul go forth from itself to the Beloved and open itself to receive all that Love longs to bestow. For what is prayer and communion but converse and interchange with Him with Whom the soul delights to be?

## 6 SELF-SURRENDER AND SELF-WILL

4. So it is neither wise, nor safe, nor true to seek Holy Religion from any such motives, all of which, and many others we might touch on, are really expressions of self. And if self leads any to the Cloister it mars their life there as it mars it in the world.

The only deep, strong, abiding foundation of the Religious Life is the personal love which GOD has for us, and our personal, responsive love for Him.

The collapse of many a Vocation, the sterility of many a soul, the aching emptiness of many a heart is due to having been led to the Cloister by the attraction of some ulterior motive, which, if examined, is to be traced to self.

Love has never disappointed. Where the Vows have been taken because GOD was realized as supreme the soul is set free to love Him supremely.

Without love the Vows do but bind, and all is worthless and dead.

Alas! this has been the bitter and embittering experience of many who have bound themselves to the Religious Life by bonds which cannot be broken. They based their life on some motive of self-gain, and in missing the constraining and sustaining power of love have missed their Vocation, and perhaps endangered their own souls.

There are many sad homes in the world where love between husband and wife has

died, or never really existed: where they were attracted by some unworthy motive: where they are bound together by a loveless bond.

So, too, there are Religious Houses where cramped souls wither and die, a burden and a care to others as they are to themselves, simply because in entering they sought themselves, and never had, or else have lost, the living fervour of love.

But even in such a case, a true conversion, late though it be, is possible, and the soul may yet turn from self to GOD.

Consider, then, that GOD is, in His very nature, LOVE. In His expression of Himself, in creation, redemption, and sanctification, He is Love. In the longing for the "fullness of time" for the Incarnation, in the Incarnate Life, Death, Resurrection, Ascension, and ceaseless Propitiation of JESUS CHRIST He is essential Love. And we who live in the *power* of the Incarnation must live in the *terms* of the Incarnation. Life in Religion is the life of love, or it is no Religious Life at all. There may be punctiliousness, obedience, poverty, chastity in their material form, but all these are without grace if love is not the foundation.

The love of GOD for us, our love for Him—quickened daily by the HOLY SPIRIT, guarded against corrosion and anaemia by each Sister using all these aids and safeguards



## 8 SELF-SURRENDER AND SELF-WILL

not for themselves, but simply because they are helps towards the deepening of love for Him Whose love for us is measureless—this, and nothing else, is the foundation of the Religious Life.

## *Address II*

### **Self=Surrender**

#### **Personal Response to Love**

DEAR SISTERS IN CHRIST,

1. Love expresses itself in self-abandonment to the Beloved—entire self-surrender, which is the personal response and acceptance of the overwhelming claim of One Who is, above all, dearest to us.

The Beloved is freely and gladly offered the entire self—the whole “being” (with all its powers, possibilities, and opportunities) is dedicated to the One Who loves and is loved supremely.

Every moment, every desire, every action is an altar of rejoicing free sacrifice; not a mere obligation, but a joy, and a free-will offering.

2. In Holy Matrimony husband and wife are to each other unique: they are to each other what neither is to any one else. It is no bondage to love, to sacrifice, to minister

to each other, to be together ; for they are no longer twain, but one : and so, forsaking all other, they keep themselves each to each so long as they both shall live.

So in Holy Religion, the postulant is drawn to GOD because He is realized as the supreme claimant of life, powers, and will.

The postulant has looked on other persons, other varieties of life, and has deliberately rejected them, and yielded to GOD, because He is supreme.

Home life, social life, married life have all been considered and rejected, because no person, no life claims her with such power as her LORD and the Religious Life.

So, looking on the Beloved (deliberately, calmly, after testing and being tested) she says : " For me there is but one beloved, but one life. My Beloved is mine, and I am His." And, believing that the Religious Life is for her *the* way, she is, in her profession, wedded to Him, and wears the ring of marriage.

3. The analogy of Holy Religion to Holy Matrimony is close and helpful, though in one point it is not exact.

In Holy Matrimony there is a continual, mutual adjustment of temperament, each to the other, till both husband and wife become one in life, aim, and desire, as they are one in sacramental union. This gradual and

continual drawing together is the working of the HOLY SPIRIT through the Sacrament of Marriage, hallowing the natures of each, and slowly perfecting unity of ideas, temperaments, work, and will.

4. But in Holy Religion there is not this *mutual* adjustment, because the Beloved is the LORD GOD Almighty, Who is perfect.

Therefore the adjustment is entirely on the side of the Religious. It is for the Religious to adapt herself to GOD—to contemplate Him, to study Him, to come to know Him more and more; to let Him reveal Himself, to speak, to urge, to win, to command: and then, day by day, act by act, desire by desire, to mould herself on Him.

And this must be continuous and entire, or vocation, love, and self-surrender fail; and self-will, self-love, self-pleasing take the place of Holy Religion, and the bride is faithless to her LORD.

Every moment must be an altar of loving self-surrender, a renewal of the offering of self to the Beloved. There cannot be, in real love, any resting in the past: "I *have* offered"; but the surrender must be, where love is, continuous and exhaustive: "I am now offering myself entirely to Him Whom my soul loveth exceedingly."

5. Now it is very possible that in Holy Religion, as in secular life, human nature



## 12 SELF-SURRENDER AND SELF-WILL

may fail to correspond with divine grace. Divine grace is not irresistible ; it is effective only where there is continual response. If love cools, grace is powerless ; if will fails, grace cannot work.

Therefore it is most necessary for Religious to test continually and searchingly whether any self-will creeps in, any impediment checks the power of grace, or stops the development of the perfect blending of the soul with the Beloved.

6. Deep, strong, abiding love for GOD is the foundation of the Religious Life.

If this be absolutely realized in mind, will, and act, all else follows.

The superstructure develops on the lines of the foundation, and the life of the Religious becomes one of continuous and entire acceptance of the principle of love—perfect unity of will, character, and aims with the will, character, and aims of the Beloved. In a word, self-surrender is the expression of love, the response of love to Love, which abides, not in the dead past, but in the living present, to-day and now.

7. This the devil knows ; and if he can, by some subtle device, mar the union between the Religious and her LORD, in ever so slight a degree, he is content. He has started the beginning of a severance ; he has begun to break the spirit of self-surrender ; he has introduced the spirit of self-

will, which, if extended, will bring about divorce.

Abiding self-surrender, then, is the response of every moment, every thought, every act to the supreme claim of Divine Love.

## *Address III*

### **Self=Surrender**

#### **The Principle of the Incarnation**

DEAR SISTERS IN CHRIST,

1. My GOD a babe! My LORD and Master lays aside "the glory which He had with the FATHER before the worlds began," and makes Himself the servant of His people! The King of kings strips Himself of His royal state, and places Himself in the power of His subjects! Majesty sleeps on the straw! Omnipotence lies helpless! Purity shares the outhouse with the cattle! The Light of the world rests in the darkness of the stable-cave! The Life of the world cries to His Mother for food! The Desire of all nations is unknown! The Wonderful, the Counsellor, the Mighty GOD, the Everlasting FATHER, the Prince of Peace—and yet a babe!

2. We are so familiar with these contrasts between the greatness of GOD and the lowliness of the Incarnation! Yet each expres-

sion has a depth that we cannot fathom, and on our entering into this stupendous mystery our Spiritual and Religious Life depends. If we miss it, we miss the power of the Incarnation in our lives.

3. Never was there such absolute self-surrender as this.

Kings have been conquered by superior forces, and compelled to surrender. Men have been crushed down by some overwhelming disaster which they could not avert. Souls have been stricken by their own sins, and a confession of helplessness has been wrung from them: "There is no whole part in my body: I am feeble and sore smitten: my sins have taken such hold upon me that I am not able to look up: yea, they are more in number than the hairs of my head, and my heart hath failed me."

But here, in the Incarnation, there is no compulsion. Here, helplessness is not bound by any external force. Here poverty and loneliness are not due to the squandering of wealth or the estranging of friends.

In the Incarnation the Creator in His love has willed to rank Himself with His creatures: because He loves them—the weakest, the lowest, the most wretched, lonely, and sinful. In the Incarnation began the earthly life of unutterable self-surrender. Words cannot express His love. Not even



## 16 SELF-SURRENDER AND SELF-WILL

the very WORD of GOD Himself could tell how greatly He loved. Complete surrender of Himself was the only way for Him to satisfy His love.

Ungrudging, unmeasured self-surrender is the very centre of the mystery of the Incarnation.

His poverty, His loneliness, His obedience, His weakness, His hiddenness are but evidence of His self-surrender, as His self-surrender is the evidence of how He greatly loved.

All these conditions come from the astounding fact that GOD Almighty surrendered Himself, because He loves us with a love as great as His surrender.

He kept nothing back. There was nothing to mark that He was GOD. The songs of the angels, the visits of the shepherds and the magi were known to few, and these held their peace. The Baptist alone saw the Spirit of GOD descending on Him at the Jordan. His brief Transfiguration was witnessed by three persons only, and these He charged to tell no man. To bystanders the voice of the FATHER was but thunder.

His self-surrender was complete. At Bethlehem, Nazareth, in His work, His death, nothing was withheld. There was no thought in His mind that those among whom He lived knew that He had surren-

dered, and what He had surrendered; no thought that those for whom He suffered appreciated His Sacrifice. It was only afterwards that one could be found to say of Him, "The SON of GOD loved me, and gave Himself for me."

And so, in Holy Religion, you, dear Sisters in CHRIST, are the guardians of your self-surrendered LORD.

4. It is so easy for us to be heroic, if only we are recognized as heroes and heroines. To give up comforts and reputation, if only we get some sympathy and credit for it. To do humble tasks proudly, while we let people know that we are capable of better things. To yield up our will in trivial details which do not touch us closely, if only we may do our own will in matters which are dear to us. All this is so easy; but it is not self-surrender. It is pride wearing the mask of humility; but it is not self-surrender. It is self-will; but it is not self-surrender.

And it is just the unblemished purity of intention of JESUS in making Himself of no reputation that marks its greatness.

He surrendered Himself—not some of His attributes, not some of the things that He could not (so to say it) help giving up, nor some of the things that were less dear to Him than others, but *Himself*.

Here is the innermost secret of the

Incarnation, and the secret of the power of the Incarnation in the life of every Christian and Religious.

5. For we are the ransomed of GOD, Who surrendered Himself, Who placed and still places Himself in our hands, Who did not and does not defend Himself against our rough treatment, nor resent our neglect of Him. His bitterest complaint was couched in tenderest words: "I am come that ye might have life. . . . Ye will not come to Me that ye might have life," and even in these He thought of us, not of Himself. We are the ransomed of Incarnate self-surrender. He yielded Himself to us for love, that we, for love, might yield ourselves to Him. He was Incarnate that, giving His life to us, we might give our lives to Him.

6. The meeting-place between CHRIST and the Christian is the Incarnation. The key that opens to us the door of that meeting-place is self-surrender. Without it the Incarnation and its power is closed to us. He could not approach us unless He surrendered Himself: so we cannot approach Him unless we surrender. If we withhold ourselves in any degree from Him, from the life to which the ransomed of GOD are pledged, then, in that degree, we separate ourselves from Him, from what He is, and can do in, and for, and with, and by us. Our life must be

hid with CHRIST in GOD—all our life: its sins, its sorrows, its hopes, its fears, its poor powers and slight abilities, our whole will and aim and purpose—all we are, all we have, must be surrendered up to Him, that in the power of the Incarnate life we may find strength; in His purity forgiveness; in His humility the cure for pride; in His truth a remedy for our faithlessness.

We must trust Him when we cast ourselves upon Him in our simplicity and weakness. He knows what self-surrender is. He knows the joy of self-emptying—the joy that was set before Him, of hearing for ever the joyous praises of those who gave themselves unreservedly to Him, Who gave Himself up unreservedly to them in the Incarnation that He might win them for His own, evermore and evermore.

7. (1) The foundation, then, of the Religious Life is love; (2) self-surrender is the continual personal response to love, and the principle of the Incarnation.

To sum up, therefore, before we pass on to the greatest danger that assails Religious Life (self-will, the rejection of love), we may consider that:

(a) Love must be absorbing, so that no self is left.

Love must be supreme, without rival.

Love must be deep, that there be no collapse.



A worn-out acquiescence in the mere framework of Holy Religion is worthless. Love must be active, renewed daily in every act and desire.

(b) Self-surrender must be the conscious, detailed, glad, personal acceptance of Divine Love.

It is of no value to have surrendered so many years ago. It must be a surrender of this moment, of this present desire and act, with ever-increasing fullness of realization. "The path of the just is as a shining light, that shineth ever more and more unto the perfect day."

8. So such questions as these throng in upon the mind :

Have I really surrendered myself to GOD ?

Is there in me a daily response to the grace of GOD ?

Is my fervour, my love, increasing as the days and years of my dedication pass ?

Is it more and more my joy to fulfil all the details and carry out the principles of the Religious Life ?

Am I now realizing in myself the power and the secret of the Incarnation ?

Is a ready, instant, daily self-surrender an *instinct* with me ?

Is there a resolved and practical daily exclusion of self-will ?

Am I detached in thought, and desire, and act, as I am in dedication ?

Do I wish to gather, or retain, any possessions for my own use?

Do I desire any relaxations of the Rule of the House, or the granting of special privileges?

Do I, in spirit or in word, evade, or try to evade, or wish to evade, the poverty to which I vowed myself?

These evils, and others, rob love of its fervour, and self-surrender of its value, and make even the Religious Life itself but another form of self-seeking and self-will.

9. How grievous to GOD! How grievous to oneself! How grievous and detrimental to the whole Community! To be pledged to love, and not to love. To be vowed to serve GOD, and not to serve Him. To have desired self-surrender, and to have taken back the offering. To have had a vision of the Highest, and to have lost it!

So, dear Sisters in CHRIST, seek renewal of love, fuller self-surrender, search out how and when self-will took the place of self-renunciation, whether self-pleasing spoils even a small part (is it a small part?) of your Religious Life.

The life of a Religious is full of uttermost danger, but it may be full of joy and peace and blessing, if only it is a willing self-surrender to Divine Love.

## *Address IV*

### **Self=Will**

#### **The Rejection of Love**

DEAR SISTERS IN CHRIST,

I. The secret and power and call of the Religious Life is the love of GOD, and its response is self-surrender.

Where these are is peace and joy and growth.

But where it never existed in any real degree, or where it has become weak and fails, there is no Religious Life—there never was, and never will be. Externally there may be—more or less decorous and seemly, but deceptive—the habit, the ring, the title, the conditions, such as seclusion, silence, obedience, verbal vows, conformity (more or less) to the letter of the Rule; but not the inward spiritual grace and freedom, and state of Holy Religion. There is but the shell, the vessel, the candlestick; but each is void: there is no kernel, no wine, no light. “Thou hast a name that thou livest and art dead.”

2. You will bear with me, for the Religious Life means so much to all (whether in Religion or not), that every care should be taken to help in ever so slight a degree towards its perfecting. You will turn my poor words homewards into your hearts, and adapt them to your own needs, and supply from your own experience their deficiency, and pray for my guidance. For, indeed, I desire to occupy, not your time, but your minds and hearts, and so help you, if GOD will.

3. The foundation, the essence, the heart and centre of the Religious Life (let us keep this constantly before us) is the personal love of GOD for us, and our personal response to Him in love. If our love be real, deep, and true and strong and abiding, all else follows. The heart that is claimed by Divine Love, and responds to that love, surrenders itself gladly and freely, and finds in its self-surrender its continual joy and freedom. The initial act of self-surrender abides and deepens and enfolds the soul more and more, because love is the source of your gift of yourself. Love cannot withhold love from Love.

This is the privilege, the atmosphere of the Religious Life—its source, its aim, its support. In love His service is perfect freedom. And when the heart of the Religious beats in union with the heart of the Beloved the life of the Religious is hidden



with CHRIST in GOD. In love there is but one aim—union with Him: one desire—His glory: nothing apart from Him: nothing between: nothing outside: no reserve: no bondage: nothing of self: no consolations but Him: no reward but the priceless gift of Himself. It is conversion passing into sanctification.

4. But is it likely that GOD'S enemy and ours would leave this ideal state to develop?

The devil knows, from his long experience, what Religious might become and effect, if love and self-surrender strengthen and develop. So he watches, and waits, and schemes, and stirs up lurking traitors within the Religious themselves.

And so we pass on from the essential foundation of the Religious Life to its greatest and most pressing danger.

5. There is no manner of doubt that this is self-will—for this is the negation of self-surrender, and the rejection of love. Religious themselves, and their confessors and directors, would with one voice affirm this.

Self creeps in: lies quiet: works now silently, now tumultuously: then changes its method, and assails from some unexpected quarter. *You* know, dear Sisters in CHRIST, from your own experience, how self works, how self undermines the very foundation of love for your LORD, and would build on the foundation of love for self. It

insinuates itself into the very oblation of your life, reserving some portion of that which you had intended to be a whole burnt-offering—which you had thought had been entirely surrendered on the altar of love. For years, it may be, you thought, and believed, and hoped that self had been consumed in the fire of Divine Love; and lo! phoenix-like it springs to life again from the very altar of sacrifice. There had been some reserve—some part of self held back—some old leaven still at work.

Unless the surrender of self is absolute and continual it is no surrender at all. Unless every motion of the will, every desire of the heart is offered separately, in detail, and as a whole and ceaselessly, there is no offering worthy of Him Who gave Himself, Who emptied Himself.

The past is nothing, the future is nothing; part is nothing. The whole must be offered, ceaselessly: this moment: this desire: this act. *That* must be surrendered, and the next, and the next, with no vacant space left in which self may lurk.

Unless this be the case we shall find, to our shame and sorrow and loss, that instead of sacrificing self to our LORD we have sacrificed our LORD to self.

6. Let us then consider self-will.

Self-will is (a) so subtle, and (b) so powerful.

## 26 SELF-SURRENDER AND SELF-WILL

(a) It is subtle because we do not recognize it as a danger—to the Religious, the greatest danger of all. They feel so secure against it, not being willingly self-willed. They really desire to surrender self to CHRIST. The most self-willed, probably, believe that in all things they are ruled by the divine will.

Believing this, or something like this, quite sincerely, they fail to look out for the subtle danger which, every moment, is sapping their life, and threatens the very existence of a true and developing Vocation—the Vocation to *be*, not merely to *do*.

Self-will is subtle because they feel it right (and it is right) to accept responsibilities: to exercise gifts: to do the work assigned which requires care, skill, initiative, consideration, capacity; and, imperceptibly, along these very lines self-will gains an independence. Slowly, but very surely, there begins to develop a cleavage between the soul and GOD: a rivalry between self-will and the Divine Will—so slight that they do not see it—which widens so slowly that it does not startle by its disloyalty to the Beloved, or alarm by its danger. It comes so cautiously that they do not see its approach, or recognize it as an enemy, till the fort has fallen, and they are prisoners of self-will.

(*b*) So also is self-will powerful, because it lies within.

For while the *occasions* come from without (in some inconvenience of the Rule; through the irksomeness of some duty; through being passed over; through the difficult temperament of some Sister; or some change in the method of the House, or parish, and so forth) the *danger* is within—from self, which has never been really surrendered, which has clung on to something, withheld something, or has been withdrawn from the altar.

Then self-will rises up in protest: in keen resentment it starts to life and assertion—under the guise of zeal for the Community: of fervour for its reputation: of watchfulness for the integrity of the Rule or Constitution: or anxiety about the conduct of some member of the House.

There lies its power: it is within—unconsecrated, unsurrendered, unconverted: strong in its confidence of being right: protesting in the name of religion: zealous in its stubbornness: self-justifying in its subtle and dangerous attack on the very foundation of the Religious Life.

8. But self-will does not rise in the hearts of those who are solidly based on the foundation of Divine Love, and have found and still find daily in self-abandonment the joy and freedom of life.

It lurks, creeps in, springs up, and works

havoc in hearts that may indeed have felt some attraction, but have never yielded to the supreme claim of Him Who emptied Himself.

Search, then, for any trace of self-will, the slightest, which mars your Vocation in the least degree. Tear it out, rend your heart and break it; and entreat of GOD a remedy, however painful, of correction of self, and a fuller revelation of the Divine Will.



## *Address V*

### Correction of Will

### Recovery of Freedom

DEAR SISTERS IN CHRIST,

1. There are but two principles—GOD and self. We serve the one or the other; we cannot serve both: they are mutually exclusive.

If we serve GOD, self has no attraction. If self attracts, it is because we have not surrendered to GOD.

GOD'S will is the key to happiness and simplicity. We are in the way of life in surrendering to His will.

Self-will is full of annoyances and complications. We are straying on the pathless desert.

The only service self-will renders us is to cheat us. We want our own way, and the more we want it the less we get it. Self thwarts itself, happily. All the annoyances, all the irritations, all the vexations of life come, not from others, but simply from baffled self-will.

So, too, all the good things, all sense of freedom and buoyancy of life, come from a surrendered will.

Self-will is out of tune; self-surrender is in tune. Self-will drags us down; self-surrender raises us up. Self-will binds us in bondage; self-surrender sets us free.

Is the spirit free when it cleaves to fallen nature, or when it seeks the Divine Nature? Self-will puts us out of touch with GOD; self-surrender brings us into union with Him.

We talk of sins, we read treatises on sins, their variety, and so forth. Yet, after all, is there not just *one* sin—the sin of self-will?

Where do all sins begin? With self-will.

Self-will is severance of desire from GOD. And who can tell to what lengths it may go, or what forms it may take? Angels and men fell through self-will. We cannot sin, save through the consent of the will. All departure from GOD begins, and is continued, by self-will—seeing two ways, we choose the lower; therefore the great, exhaustive claim of Divine Love is, “My son, give Me thine *heart*.”

Let us pass on, then, to consider how we may correct the will, and so gain freedom.

There are three kinds of wills:

2. *The purposeless will.*

This is hardly a will at all. People who are purposeless have no aim, or object, or

standard in life. They seem devoid of all sense of responsibility. Nothing interests them; they ramble through life; fractions of things attract them for a fraction of time; they pass aimlessly from one transient impulse to another.

3. Then there is *the perverted will*.

Here there is some force, but it is misdirected. There is energy, but no high conception how to use that energy aright. Such people spend themselves, but for nought; they give themselves, and others, an infinity of trouble in their wild pursuit of something entirely unworthy, or even positively evil; they follow some course of action, blindly, which is dictated by their own self-will. People with perverted wills feel that they must have some vent, and are restless and fussy; and leave their own faults unchecked, while they are busy with mending the defects of others. There are certain degenerates who hunger, and feed on coal or earth.

4. Then there is *the isolated will*.

Loneliness often leads to sin, and people often make a desert for themselves by their self-will. After a time the self-willed person's character hardens and narrows — the cold eye, the thin lips, the acid voice give warning. The wearisome reiteration of such phrases as, "I think this," "I don't approve of that," "So-and-so is quite wrong

according to my ideas," shuts them off from others, shuts them up in their own isolation, cuts them off from the joy of giving and receiving sympathy, and from the bracing effects of caring and being cared for.

Now in a Community it should not be possible for any one to be isolated. But there are cases, and they are due to self-will. The very terms in such constant use as "Brother," "Sister," "Father," "Mother" indicate the family life, which is one of the most valuable features of a common unity, and the isolation of self-will mars this unity.

5. Now what is needed is some correction of these types of will, some redemption of bondage, some remedy of the purposeless, the perverted, the isolated will. Not a code of rules, not something complicated, but a remedy close at hand.

6. The *purposeless will* needs a Leader Whom it can follow, Who can interest it. It needs One Who claims allegiance, Who is worthy of allegiance, Who makes the source and method and purpose of life clear and attractive, One Who *knows* "Whence I came, whither I go," and the purpose of His life, "I came not to do Mine own will, but the will of My FATHER which sent Me"; Who is interested in it, "I rejoice to do it: yea, Thy law is within My heart," "Wist ye not that I must be about My FATHER'S business?"

Our Blessed LORD *knew* the whence and the why and the whither of His life. He is the Leader.

7. Then the *perverted will*, misdirected, uncontrolled.

So many paths open out, so many lights glitter, so many attractions conflict.

Here, again, standing before us, calm and purposeful, is our LORD Himself: "I am *the way, the light, the truth, the life.*"

It is perfectly simple, astonishingly simple. He *knows*, we grope. His will is the FATHER'S will, and the FATHER'S will lays down the eternal principles of life and conduct which are the expression of His eternal nature.

If our will is our guide, it leads us "o'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent," but not, confessedly not, into the paths of peace, or by the still waters, or to the rest of the people of GOD. How can it?

It is perfectly simple. It is just consecration of the will; surrender of the will to the highest; conversion to GOD, Who is the one source, guide, and end of our being; and therefore it is the consecration, surrender, and conversion of our selves and our work.

Otherwise all our life, being, and work are at cross purposes with the object of our existence; outside GOD, apart from GOD, opposed to GOD, and therefore without



grace—just self-working, from self and for self, beginning, continuing, and ending in self.

See the vivid contrast!—"I am come not to do Mine own will," "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me," "I seek not Mine own will."

8. *The isolated will.* All wills that are unconsecrated are isolated. They revolve round themselves, each in its own narrow and ever-narrowing orbit.

The converted will, the surrendered will is in vital union with our Blessed LORD, Who could say, "I am not alone." That is a deep and great principle, one which is characteristic of the Catholic Church, which is the spiritual body of Him Who is not alone. To the converted, surrendered will all the stored-up grace of GOD in the Communion of Saints is opened out. "Thou hast set my feet in a large room: yea, I have a goodly heritage."

But self-will shuts up the soul in solitude. A consecrated will is set free from its bondage, and rejoices in the glorious liberty of the children of GOD.

9. A master we must have. There are but two—a beneficent Master, Who knows and desires our good always, and Who will advance us; or a tyrant, who will enslave us.

No one loves as GOD loves. No tyrant is so exacting, so increasingly exacting, so bent

on keeping us narrowed down in our own littleness as self.

10. Self-will is the negation of self-surrender, and the rejection of love.

The will is the one and only possession of man which is his to offer; all else belongs to GOD.

The will is the turning-point which decides our relation to GOD.

Countless saints have so surrendered their wills as to have no consciousness of self left, and in this have found their joy, their liberty, their life.

11. Now to get to close quarters with ourselves.

How far have you wandered in the ways of self-will? How long? Go back in thought to the time of your first response to the voice of GOD, calling you to Him in the happy life of Holy Religion? How clear His voice! How sweet the response of your heart! No self, only GOD!

How is it now? Has the joy and peace and power of self-surrender grown ever brighter, more full of rest and strength? Or does self still insist on its rights, and so wrong you? How, when, and why did that self which you thought was dead stir into life again? What are the occasions of self-will? How does it declare itself? With what persons? Under what circumstances? For what reason?

## 36 SELF-SURRENDER AND SELF-WILL

What, dear Sisters in CHRIST, did each one of you find in yourselves of self-will after the last address, when, on your knees before GOD, you searched into your hearts?

12. Will you, then, concentrate all your powers of mind and desire on just these two points?

(a) Real, close *knowledge of GOD*. Do this at great length. Contemplate Him—His Divine Nature; His Divine Will, which is our peace; His revelation of Himself in the Person of JESUS CHRIST, Who is our Leader and Master, Who surrendered Himself that we, in responsive surrender, might find our freedom.

(b) And then gain a full *knowledge of yourself*. Leave others alone; to their own Master they stand or fall. Do this very briefly; it is a dangerous, but a needful task, and may easily lead to over-introspection. Therefore do this last swiftly, and in the light of the knowledge of GOD. "Show me Thyself; show me myself; make me like unto Thee."

## Address VI

### Knowledge of God

#### The Key to Self-Knowledge

DEAR SISTERS IN CHRIST,

1. The whole purpose of these addresses is to concentrate on the inner essentials of the Religious Life—*love*, as the foundation (the love of GOD for us and our love for Him); *self-surrender*, which is response of love to Love; and on that peril of the Religious Life, *self-will*, which is the negation of self-surrender and the rejection of love.

Other matters, such as the vows, silence, seclusion, simplicity, etc., are but aids and safeguards.

The heart that is given to GOD (surrendered to Him consciously, fully, ceaselessly, and freely) finds no restraint in obedience, is indifferent to poverty, loves purity, welcomes silence and seclusion, which it finds thronged with all that is spiritual and divine. The yielded heart is set free.

If the life irks, if the details irritate, if

there is any sense of bondage, it is simply because the heart has not been possessed by love and abandoned itself to GOD.

It is, therefore, I believe, more profitable to deal closely with these three subjects (love, self-surrender, and self-will) than to try and cover a wider area; to consider the central principles rather than the details.

If love and self-surrender are potent in your lives, then you will be glad to dwell on them, and perfect them.

But if they are deficient (if self-interest, self-gain, self-love, self-will are at work) then you will be thankful to be warned of the danger.

For, indeed, the Religious Life, in its essence, is just self-surrender to Love; and the godless life is the expression of self-will.

2. For this reason the last address, on correction of will, closed with two very simple counsels: (1) know GOD, and (2) in Him come to know yourself; with the old and simple prayer, "Show me Thyself; show me myself; make me like unto Thee."

3. This order is probably the best and safest. In Creed and Duty and Prayer we begin with GOD, before we turn our minds to ourselves.

(a) Try, then, to place yourself in the presence of GOD, and contemplate Him Himself, His attributes, His dealings, His



purposes, and so forth, and so learn to know Him. This should take a long time, for there is much to learn.

(*b*) Then, in the light of this knowledge of GOD, give a little time to gain a broad, general, working knowledge of yourself. Some time is necessary, but the shortest is best. For self-scrutiny may so easily become self-introspection, and so lead either (and most probably) to dejection, or to an intensified self-consciousness. For the present purpose Confession is not in view, but the gaining of a comprehensive knowledge of self. So get firm hold of the *broad facts* of your character.

If you have an hour, give three quarters of the hour to contemplation of GOD, and a quarter of an hour to the gaining this general knowledge of yourself.

It is strange how Protestant Catholics are ! The Catholic instinct is to put GOD first. The Protestant instinct begins with the soul.

Many who believe themselves to be Catholics are really Protestant, and many who would say that they were Protestants have the real Catholic instinct.

Real Catholics (whether they call themselves such or Protestants) have GOD always before them. Their greatest consciousness is GOD—their source, their life, their end. He is their centre, their study, their joy, and their inspiration.

Such an attitude, such an instinct, such a relation is divine.

It is a most grievous thing when Catholics spend so much time and care in pottering over *themselves*, and so little time and thought is given to GOD. It is a most hopeful sign when Protestants have the real Catholic and spiritual instinct, which looks first to GOD.

There is no greater hindrance to the full spiritual Catholic development of devout Protestants than the selfish materialism of those who consider themselves to be model Catholics.

Those who are bound in the shackles of self, who are self-centred, are not even Christian, much less are they Catholics or Religious, however correct their phraseology or devout their demeanour.

4. Let us, then, consider more in detail how we may gain a better knowledge of GOD, and thus a truer knowledge of self.

*Knowledge of GOD.*

(a) First, of GOD Himself—as He is in Himself, what He is, who He is.

And this without any reference to yourself—what He is to you, or what He does for you.

Consider and contemplate GOD objectively, before you contemplate Him subjectively.

Try to realize *Him* before you realize yourself, or His relation towards you.

There is this wonderful assurance given by

S. John that "we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him *as He is*" (1 S. John iii. 2). In contemplation of Him, Himself, we shall grow into His likeness. This we can begin even here and now. So forget self, and contemplate GOD as He has revealed Himself. His titles are marvellously helpful. For instance, He is light, love, spirit, eternal, omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent, unchangeable, glorious, perfect, holy, just, gracious, merciful, faithful, etc.

Take each expression, think on the lines it suggests, and follow it out as far as you are able. Let that sink into your mind, and pass on to the next, and so on.

A *Concordance of Subjects in Bible Helps*, or the *New Topical Text Book* will be a help to gather up these titles and expressions.

He is Three—The FATHER—Creator.

The SON—Redeemer.

The HOLY GHOST—Sanctifier.

He is One—In His nature, in His purpose.

In perfect unity in Himself.

Nothing conflicts in Him.

He is indivisible.

Consider—His patience in waiting.

His humility in the Incarnation.

His quietness in dealing with souls.

And so on, step by step, title by title,

attribute by attribute, as it comes to you. And do this at length, and frequently, without any subjective thought, till He reveals Himself to you, and you begin to see Him, less faintly, "as He is."

(*b*) Then, having rested quietly for a long time in this objective contemplation of GOD, and allowed Him to reveal Himself to your receptive soul, go on to think of all that He is in reference to you, taking the expressions noticed before (4 *a*), and seeing how He is *your* LIGHT; how He Who is LOVE loves *you*; and so on. This is to contemplate GOD subjectively.

In this way, by contemplating Him first objectively, second subjectively, you will find

(1) Your spirit will be drawn upward to Him, outward from self, and attracted towards GOD.

The saints and angels in heaven adore Him for what *He is*, because they know GOD, and see Him "as He is." He is so attractive if we will allow Him to attract.

(2) This revelation of Himself will be a wholesome shock: "O my GOD! I never knew *Thee*!"

(3) And a *call*: "This is my GOD, and what am I? This He is in Himself, and this to me! And He, being what He is, calls me to Himself, just as I am!"

(4) And it will help you to form, to develop, to invigorate your poor virtues,

and to co-operate with the HOLY SPIRIT, and to grow like Him, by His grace and your response.

(5) And if the thought comes: "Can I respond after all these years? Can I love? Can I surrender? Can I get free from self? Oh, yes! 'My grace is sufficient.' Others have, so can I. Not by leaps and bounds, but slowly, simply, happily, in the quiet ways of daily life."

And so resolve, "I will set GOD always before me."

#### 5. *Knowledge of self.*

Then, having amassed some of the treasure of this fuller knowledge of GOD (1) as He is in Himself, and (2) as He is to you, pass on, in His strength and in this light, to venture on the dangerous task of considering (3) yourself, but always correcting anything like minute self-introspection, directly you are conscious of it, by reverting to objective contemplation; then, having regained your balance, go on with your work of gaining a general knowledge of the broad lines of your character.

In this be brief and not minute.

(1) *Exclude others*, or their defects will increase your self-esteem, because we are apt by some fatal instinct to dwell on their faults and how they affect us. Our present purpose is to contrast ourselves with GOD, not with our neighbours.



(2) *Avoid self-contemplation.* That is robbing GOD and forgetting Him. It develops over-introspection and makes us either morbid or complacent. S. Paul (2 *Cor.* x. 12) straightly forbids it, when he says it is not wise to measure ourselves by ourselves, or compare ourselves among ourselves. The standard at which we are aiming is not self, nor our neighbour, but GOD.

Self-contemplation is the devil's parody of self-examination.

All meddling with self is dangerous. True, it must be done; but drastically and quickly, as one clears away a foul dust-heap with its noxious exhalations. Clear it away, burn it, and have done with it.

What we are aiming at here is to gain a clear knowledge of the *broad facts* of our general character, not a minute knowledge of our sins.

(3) *Be definite, but not minute.* Take, for instance, temper. "I was in a temper this morning with——, about——, because of——. The same thing happened yesterday, because of——. And I said——. What resulted? How often am I in a temper?" Then worry no longer about the details, but realize the general facts, and contrast yourself in this with GOD.

Whatever the obvious occasion and cause may be, the root of temper is baffled self-esteem, self-love.

So with other features of your character.

(4) *Be cheerful.* After all, trying to know yourself and mend yourself is a very cheerful thing. It is much the same as trying to heal one's body, or to keep a house clean and tidy. We know our way about our own neighbourhood and town and house in a very simple and matter-of-fact way. So we should have the same simple, brisk, practical, matter-of-fact knowledge of one's self, and turn it to good account.

(5) And *seek help* from your Superior, your Confessor, your Director, and, above all, from the HOLY SPIRIT, Whose great joy it is to help us in our infirmities.

And all this should be done in a few minutes; in one fourth of the time you have given to gaining an objective and subjective knowledge of GOD.

Then, lastly, having gained some clear general knowledge of self, turn again to GOD and contemplate Him once more "as He is."

We are aiming in all these addresses at the elimination of self in all its varied forms, in order that we may respond by surrender to the infinite and gracious love of GOD, Who has called us to serve Him in the ways of Holy Religion.

## *Address VII*

### **Penitence**

#### **The Result of Knowledge**

DEAR SISTERS IN CHRIST,

1. During the whole of these addresses we have all been trying, by the help of the HOLY SPIRIT, to get a fuller and more perfect knowledge of GOD and of ourselves.

The truest, safest, and best way is to put GOD first; to begin with Him as Creed, Duty, and Prayer begin with Him.

People, quite earnest and devout people, so often make the mistake of beginning with themselves.

But it is best to put GOD first; to let Him reveal Himself to us (1) as He is in Himself; (2) as He is to us; and then (3) to see what we are in the light of this knowledge.

By this means we gain much rest from weary self-scrutiny, which so easily becomes introspective, disquieting ourselves in vain—for it is in vain—if we circle round self.

Not that close and searching self-examination is not necessary; not that it may be passed over. It must be done; but let it be done in the light of that knowledge of GOD Himself that He sheds forth into our hearts.

Most religious people are too self-conscious and self-centred, regarding, perhaps unknowingly, their souls as of prime importance. And so they approach GOD through the tangle of themselves, instead of approaching themselves through the majestic simplicity of GOD. So self hides GOD; but GOD would reveal Himself (1) as He is, then (2) as He is to us, and then (3) would reveal ourselves to ourselves. "In Thy light shall we see light."

2. Following this method we have gained a spiritual experience which will have an increasing value. It is of the utmost importance that we should have the right standpoint, that we should realize that the essential *foundation* of the Religious Life is the love which GOD has for us, that our *response* to His love is self-surrender, and that all self-will is a *rejection* of love and a negation of abandonment. And, in order to purge out of our hearts all trace of self-will, and to get free, we must correct the will. And this may best be done by gaining an intimate and personal *knowledge of GOD*, which is the true key to *knowledge of self*.

This is an experience of increasing value.

3. And more than this. Our own spiritual experience (which might contain much of self) is reinforced by our Blessed LORD. What is eternal life? Not mortification, obedience, faith, prayer, or good works. "This is life eternal, to *know Thee* the only true GOD, and JESUS CHRIST, Whom Thou hast sent" (S. *John* xvii. 3). To *know* GOD is to *love* Him.

Passing away from restless heart-searchings into the quiet, peaceful, loving knowledge of GOD Himself is the peculiar privilege of the children of the kingdom. "The world hath not known Thee." Their eyes, ears, and hearts are closed. They have no conception of GOD, and therefore no standard of life.

So here all our thoughts have been directed to the great need of allowing GOD to reveal Himself to us, and in the light of that revelation to come to know ourselves.

4. From our own spiritual experience, then, and from divine counsel, we are drawn to give much time and care to contemplation of GOD, and *in Him* to see ourselves.

Then we shall glorify and adore GOD Himself—Who is light and love, Who is perfect and gracious—and so shame will cover our face. "Woe is me, for I am undone. Created, re-created in His image.



The temple of the HOLY GHOST, the shrine of the very Prince of Life Himself. Fallen, rejecting, full of self-love and self-pleasing! How little have I known GOD, or myself! Show me Thyself; show me myself; make me like unto Thee!"

5. The very next desire that will arise out of this line of thought, out of this method which we have followed will be that of *penitence*.

"GOD, so full of love—and I of self.

"GOD, Who is light—yet I am dark.

"GOD, Who is changeless — and I impulsive."

"I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear: but now *mine eye seeth Thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes*" (*Job* xlii. 5, 6). "The LORD turned and looked on Peter . . . and he wept bitterly."

6. Let us, then, consider the *motive* for penitence.

How often it has been fear of the consequences of sin, the shame, the loss incurred. Yet all this is but wounded self-love, wounded self-esteem.

But let us close our eyes and see GOD. "How great is His mercy, and I am so ungrateful; His benefits, and I make so small a response! He is my Creator, my Incarnate LORD, my Sanctifier, and I rebel, live apart, and refuse His grace! Such

riches of grace! Because He is GOD Because He is Love! And I have sinned by self-will against Divine Love. I have wounded Love."

That is the true *motive* of penitence.

7. The *method* of penitence is not self-scrutiny. We may know every part, every turn and corner of our hearts, and yet have no penitence.

Till we see GOD "as He is"; till we have gained an inner, personal experience of Him Himself, and then of what He is in His relation to us, and then what we are in our relation to Him, we shall not be on the right line to a true method of penitence.

Only by knowing GOD may we come to a true realization of the bitter, exceeding sinfulness of sin, of the shamefulfulness of the rebellion of self-will, of the madness of turning from Him Who is altogether lovely.

8. *Maintenance* of penitence. Again, nothing of which self may be the cause or centre will serve. No consideration of the misery of the state of sin, of the punishment due to sin, of personal gain, or security, or peace, as the result of penitence and pardon. All these come from self.

But if we are to *maintain* penitence we must live in the presence of GOD, abide in the vision of Him Who is Light and Love. "The LORD is my strength, my strong rock,

my defence, my Saviour, my GOD, my might, my salvation, my refuge."

We must keep, by His grace and our consecrated will, the soul free from wilful sin, from self, that He may work! For what is penitence but making room for GOD, keeping the mirror clean and bright that He may be reflected? Psalm cxxxix, "LORD, Thou hast searched me out," will greatly help us to maintain our penitence.

9. And all this will serve to bring self into subjection to GOD—GOD Who is the *motive, method, and maintainer* of penitence.

We must and (by the grace of GOD and our co-operation) can keep down self, starve self, weaken self, cast out self, and kill self; and this not so much by direct means but rather by getting nearer to GOD first, by knowing Him better. And then there comes, gradually, a growing desire for GOD, a longing for Him, a taste for Him, a love for Him; and self becomes hateful, and there is room for GOD in our hearts. "My LORD, and my GOD!"

## *Address VIII*

# **The Establishing of the Will**

## **Stages of Growth**

DEAR SISTERS IN CHRIST,

1. It is by no means impossible that the Religious Life may become narrow, tepid, and arrested. And if this is ever the case it may be traced to a want of self-surrender to Divine Love.

If it is based on love it is set free, is warm, and full of growth; but self-love binds it, chills it, checks it.

We need, therefore, to get away and keep away from the unwholesome atmosphere of self into the bracing atmosphere of GOD; to learn to know GOD more and more fully; to correct the will by that inner, personal knowledge of GOD Himself, for Himself, Who is Love, and Whom we can only approach and serve in love.

Our penitence is so often ineffective, because it is unreal, because it is little more than a painful, sometimes an agonizing,

regret and remorse that we have fallen below our own standard and have wounded our self-esteem, rather than a deep sorrow that we have sinned against GOD, and wounded Love. Penitence must, surely, be wrongly based (as the whole Religious and Spiritual Life would be wrongly based), if we live in a circle of which self is the centre.

2. Speaking broadly, all Spiritual and Religious Life—its source, its maintenance, its regulation, its development, and its attainment—must rest on no other foundation than the love of GOD for us, and on our personal love and knowledge of Him.

He *is* the supreme One, and therefore we must seek Him first of all; and in Him come to know ourselves, and therefore in penitent love surrender ourselves to Him, just because He is Love, and because we love.

3. We have, then, to *establish the will* in an abiding, deepening, living union with the supreme will of GOD.

Such metaphors as these may help. We must clear the ground: make it ready: dig deep for the foundation: lay the stones well and truly: plan the fabric wisely (considering the materials and the purpose): build slowly and strongly. Or, again, we must mortify each of our naturally evil and corrupt affections: acquire virtues: grow and abide in sanctity.

And the opportunities lie within the



sphere of our daily life. They are quite within our reach. They are quite simple and ordinary and commonplace. GOD only requires of us to become what we can be, to build with such materials as we have—if not a palace, then a hut. The very stones over which we stumble are the steps that may lead us upward.

All this must be done without any self-conscious scrupulousness. Each day has its part in establishing us in Him, as He guides and helps, and as we respond.

4. (1) MORTIFICATION. As we keep GOD always before us, and see and know Him better, all that is apart from GOD becomes more and more detested. We sin because we forget GOD. We are self-willed, self-centred, self-pleasing, even in Religious Life, because we forget GOD. And we forget Him because we do not know Him. And we do not know Him because we do not love Him. We cannot forget one whom we know and love; it is impossible.

In the conscious presence of GOD, knowing His perfect nature, knowing that He is Love, we desire to love Him simply for Himself, to know Him better, and serve Him more purely. And, therefore, we are impelled by love to cast out all things that offend—or at least to desire it, or wish to desire it; to cleanse our hearts and lives of all positive evil, of all that is hostile to Him;

to mortify each thought that is not in harmony with the mind of GOD, each movement of the will which is in any degree opposed to the will of GOD, each act which is not an act of love to GOD.

So the first necessity for the establishing of the will is to purge ourselves of all that is evil and untrue, before we can begin to rise to higher things.

It is absurd to call any life Spiritual or Religious if there be in it any wilful hostility to GOD. Nothing can grow in a sterile soil, or be built on unprepared ground. There is nothing of truth in falseness. There is nothing of love in ill-will. There is nothing of simplicity in a divided heart.

If the soul clings to creatures it cannot cling to GOD. There must be a surrender of creatures if self is to be yielded up to GOD. And there can be no Religious Life without purging and self-surrender.

We may not disarrange the divine order. GOD *is* first, and to us He must *be* first.

So we have to face facts. And if there be in any of us any bad temper, or grudges, or touchiness, or self-assertion, these must first be cast out as abhorrent and as insults to GOD. All jealousies, detractions, resentments, contempt of others are hateful to GOD, and they must go. There must be no attachment even to the trivial things to which some are so strangely attracted.

Nothing that comes from self, ministers to self, circles round self must be endured. With remorseless resolve everything that offends must be cut off, cast out, and abandoned.

Even things, good enough in themselves, if loved for themselves, may hinder. Therefore, all that is evil, all that may shelter evil—all self-love, self-concentration (however small)—must be instantly, utterly, and constantly checked and mortified. And this is but a mere beginning of the essential preparation of the attempt to serve GOD. "Nothing is mine. I am nothing. I have nothing. Only my will, and that is Thine." Self must be burnt out.

Yet in all this there must be no self-imposed austerities; for there again self lurks.

And this mortification is but the first step towards the beginnings of a dawning desire to try and make some slight effort towards striving to live the really Religious Life. It is just clearing the way, just a stirring, which will be drastic and slow, but simple, sensible, and steady. Mortification is not sanctification; it is merely the beginning of a preparation towards becoming less unfit for the service of GOD.

In the Religious Life so many are so near real happiness. There is often so thin a barrier between the soul and GOD, and this

barrier is self; and the joy is worth the sacrifice.

5. Then there comes the second stage—  
FORMATION OF VIRTUES.

This comes after, with, and from the killing of the evil. The gradual formation of virtues is the result of the reformation. It comes, with the power of the HOLY SPIRIT, through the watchful care of each thought as it rises, of each will as it forms, of each act as it issues, after and with the expulsion of evil.

Happily each helps the other. Mortification helps formation, as formation helps mortification. As mortification makes room, so formation occupies the space. As evil is cast out good comes in. As the Divine Life develops so it kills the self-life.

Both nature and grace abhor a vacuum. There can be no such thing as unoccupied space.

So all that we have to do is *to give space in which GOD may work*, and to *co-operate with Him in His working*.

Experience has taught that often the best way by which we may overcome evil is to practice the contrary virtue; to give self no place by subjection, no, not for an hour. Not to parley, but to act; not to consider the evil, but to turn brightly and heartily to the good. So we may subdue a sharp, cynical tongue by speaking kindly, ill temper by

smiling, selfishness by thoughts and acts of generosity.

It is a most happy thing that mortification and development are mutually helpful. It is because the will is in process of surrender to GOD, and therefore GOD sends instant grace.

And, gradually by grace, will, and practice the desire for GOD grows, and the desire for self lessens. Self is less attractive; GOD more winning. Self weakens; the soul is stronger, the bondage relaxes; and there is freedom. There comes into the soul something of the joy and hope that mortification always brings through the sense of response and conquest and vision of the larger, higher life that is revealed. "Lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh."

The process is very gradual. It is often checked by some unexpected collapse. And this is such a happy experience, because by our failures we come to know our weak places; and so, by coming to them over and over again, we are prepared for the difficulties, and gain strength. Just as in music, the difficult passages need constant practice, till at last all is easy, and we wonder where the difficulty lay.

With good will, good courage, and GOD's good grace the conquest is certain, sooner or later, if not in the highest degree (as



might have been the case had we begun earlier and done better), at least in some degree. So, if we cannot sing the LORD'S song faultlessly and with the sweetest of voices, at least we can say with great joy, "I will sing and give praise with the best member that I have." And, perchance, it will sound more sweet to Him than it does to us.

Take, then, the most obvious fault, whatever it may be, and turn that into the contrary virtue. Very often the weakest point in a character has become the strongest. The loving S. John was once violent; S. Peter was once impulsive; and S. Francis d'Assisi, so indifferent to comfort, was once luxurious. All the saints are about us with their comforting assurance and testimony to the power of grace and will to transform and develop the human heart into an habitation wherein GOD delights to dwell.

6. First, then, cast out positive evil.

Second, replace evil with good.

And both these processes must be effected by the grace of GOD co-operating with your gladly-surrendered will yielded up to the love of GOD.

7. Then there is SANCTIFICATION, the wide and ever-widening landscape of the life in GOD, the depths of a life hidden with CHRIST in GOD, the fullness of growth in holiness, the rejoicing of unity in Him Who

is light and love and life, the service of perfect freedom — the freedom of perfect service—free from self and free for GOD.

Then we really begin ; then is the real abandonment—the real life, buoyant in its glad detachment from self (with all its degradation) and attachment to Him Who has made us alive from the dead, alive unto Himself.

The joy of it!

The *thoughts*, no longer of self, leap instinctively to GOD.

The *will*, no longer clinging to the creature, clings to the Creator.

The *actions*, no longer expressions of self-will, are the actions of GOD within the soul.

8. And these three stages, as we have looked on them in very simple form, are (1) the purgative, (2) the illuminative, and (3) the unitive way: or mortification, formation, sanctification, based on penitence, which is the result of real knowledge of GOD Himself, accepted by the will which desires to correct itself by the divine standard, whereby self is recognized as an enslaving tyrant, and GOD as pure, beneficent Love, Who sets us free from self that we may love and serve Him for Himself, Who gave Himself for us that we might surrender ourselves to Him Who is above all, blessed for ever.

GOD is all, and self is nothing.

## *Address IX*

# The Need of the Age

## Personal Witness

DEAR SISTERS IN CHRIST,

Look out on the Church of GOD, and the world of GOD! Both of them the creation of GOD. Both formed to set forth the glory of GOD. Both spheres of the love of GOD.

1. Yet the world is at enmity with GOD. Not in its material constitution—for that is in harmony with GOD. But the world-power is hostile to Him. The mind of the world is contrary to the mind of GOD. “Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with GOD? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of GOD” (*S. James* iv. 4). “The world cannot hate you; but Me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil” (*S. John* vii. 7). “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the FATHER is not in him. For

all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the FATHER, but is of the world. And we know that we are of GOD, and the whole world lieth in wickedness" (1 *S. John* ii. 15, 16; v. 19). Quite frankly the world states its resolve to forget GOD, to put Him aside, to have its own aims, to adopt its own maxims, to reject GOD.

But it is not against GOD Himself that the world is at enmity. It does not know GOD Himself. If it knew Him, it would love Him. It could but love Him, for "GOD is Love." He is what the world needs. It is against its own misconception of GOD that it revolts. It cannot accept its own caricature of GOD. "In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of CHRIST, Who is the image of GOD, should shine unto them" (2 *Cor.* iv. 4).

So the world is unable to see GOD Himself, or to know Him, or to serve Him, or to obey Him, or to love Him.

The world has divorced itself from its Creator; it has lost Him, and is trying to create a GOD for itself—the kind of GOD it thinks it wants.

The material constitution obeys: the moral constitution rebels. Save that in its code of laws it retains a smattering of the law of GOD it has lost GOD.

The world sins, and laughs. It dethrones Him, rejects Him—"We will not have this Man to reign over us." It would (perhaps will) lock the school door against Him, pass laws in defiance of His declared will, but in accordance with its own assumptions.

Staggering like a drunken man, it gropes in the dark, and stumbles on, ever further from GOD—its only good, its only hope, its only guide.

"Whosoever sinneth hath not seen Him neither known Him."

2. The Church has fallen from her first love. Not in her divine constitution, for against her the gates of hell can never prevail. "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (*S. Matt.* xvi. 18). But the human element in her has failed, failed to correspond to grace given. Thus she loses power in the face of the revolt of the world against its Creator.

Units stand forth to whom GOD is all. Thousands remain to whom GOD is a tradition, a name, a symbol—and little more.

The Church has fallen under the dominion of the world. She has drunk of the spirit of the world. Her powers are paralysed. She has made a compact with the world with which she is pledged to be at war. She is entangled with that very snare against which



she was forewarned. To-day she acquiesces in what she would once have protested against to the death. She is powerless to protest where she connives. She is allied to the very power that GOD formed her to withstand. She has forsaken her vantage-ground, and is forced into humiliating positions in striving to maintain a semblance of her power. Men, shrewd men of the world, see that her claims do not square with her time-serving timidity of action. In theory she claims to be that which she is in essence—the salt of the earth, the congregation of saints, the light of the world, the bride of CHRIST, the city set upon a hill.

And men, shrewd men, say—and they have a right to say—Has not the salt lost its savour? Where are the saints? What communion hath light with darkness? Where is her fidelity to her heavenly Bridegroom? Where is the boasted order and discipline of the model city?

Her mission and her powers are alike divine; but her human element has failed to correspond to either. She is charged by GOD Himself to be the unfailing witness to the crucified LORD—to bear forward the Cross of CHRIST—to bear within her the Cross—her hands and feet (all her doing and going) pierced with the nails of crucifixion to the world—crucified with CHRIST—her

speech, thought, and motives yielded up to Him. She is pledged by her very existence to the sole service of GOD—to spread to the utmost the true faith of CHRIST and Him crucified—to know Him only—to watch as one who waits for the coming of her LORD. Her ministers are to be unmistakably the ambassadors of the most high GOD—Gospelmen, who live in the power of the “good news”—messengers passing to and fro between GOD and His people. Her children, soldiers who cannot turn back in the day of battle—dedicated to Him as a royal priesthood, a peculiar people. Her Religious Communities pledged to the Vows and Counsels of Perfection, and rejoicing in self-surrender to the Divine Love which has called them.

And yet, look out on the Church of GOD, and on the world of GOD. How do both, created by GOD, respond to His purpose?

3. The world has failed, the Church has failed. The devil has perverted the world, and the world has corrupted the Church. In her human element she has fallen away from CHRIST, as the world has fallen away from GOD.

Here, then, is the one thing needed:

The Church of GOD must get back to her essential relations with GOD. She must be known and felt by all to be the living Church of the living GOD. Not content to live merely on her past, but quick with the

Divine Life to-day—a living sacrifice in CHRIST to GOD. In character, creed, and conduct the champion of GOD. The line of demarcation must be clearly drawn: “This is of CHRIST, this is of the world. I cannot do this because I am a Christian. No other course is open to me because I am a Christian. I cannot compromise because I am a Christian. Self shall not rule me because I am a Christian; and CHRIST is my only Master, and to Him I am surrendered.”

4. Here we are brought face to face with responsibilities to GOD, His Church, His world—the responsibility of being personal witnesses in the world for Him.

In the Incarnation our Blessed LORD entrusted Himself to us; so in the working out of the Incarnation He leaves to us the task of convincing the world. “I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil. As Thou hast sent Me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word; that they all may be one; as Thou, FATHER, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me. I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one; and

that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me" (*S. John* xvii. 15, 18, 20, 21, 23).

Had the Church remained loyal to her LORD—one in her internal life and external order, crucified with CHRIST, dead to the world, buried, and living with the risen, ascended CHRIST—the world would have known that the FATHER hath sent the SON, that He loved the world, and it would have been won for Him.

But it is because of Christians' disloyalty to CHRIST, because of our faint-heartedness and compromise that the Cross has not conquered the world.

5. What can we do to help the world to believe on Him, know Him, and serve Him?

But little directly; but this we can, and must do; this is imperative.

Our lives must bear convincing witness that we believe and are sure that He is the CHRIST, the SON of the living GOD.

We, the members of CHRIST, we, "who profess and call ourselves Christians," must "show forth His praise, not only with our lips, but in our lives, by giving up ourselves to His service." We must be what we claim to be: pledged, crucified to the world with CHRIST, living, rejoicing sacrifices to the risen LORD in the living Church of the living GOD.

This is the need of the age—personal,

consistent witness, Christians who are living witnesses to CHRIST, to His Incarnation, Life, Death, Resurrection, Ascension, Session ; to His power and His love ; obviously soldiers of the Cross, and servants to the King of kings.

6. And we must begin with ourselves ; we must gain this overpowering love ; we must be engrossed in CHRIST ; we must be identified with His interests. "They took knowledge of them that they had been with JESUS." It was on account of this convincing testimony in the earliest days of the Church that the "three thousand were added to the LORD" at the first Pentecost ; that the "great company of the priests were obedient to the Faith" ; that the world was staggered, and protested, "Behold, the world is gone after Him."

We must begin with ourselves, resolutely obeying GOD'S call to lead a godly and a Christian life, walking worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called, abiding in close intercourse with Him to Whom in love we have deliberately surrendered ourselves.

Even the volatile world would have its attention arrested if we were Christians in fact, as we are in name.

It is our insincerity that has betrayed the cause of CHRIST. The power of Christianity



is enormous ; it is no failing cause, for it is the cause of GOD. But the power is held in abeyance by our self-will and want of conviction ; and we need renewal by personal abandonment to CHRIST.

There lies the weakness, the danger, and the remedy ; not the weakness of Christianity, but the weakness of Christians. It is not Christianity that is on its trial ; it is Christians who are being tested. There is the need of the age—Christians who are living, surrendered witnesses.

And if this is true of the rank and file of Christians it is tenfold more true of *you*, dear Sisters in CHRIST. For you have willingly added to the Baptismal Vows of Renunciation, Belief, and Duty the further Vows of the Religious Life and the Counsels of Perfection.

If Christians, generally, are the salt of the earth, Religious Communities are the salt of the Church.

The world looks to us all to be what we profess to be. We seculars look to you Religious (more, perhaps, than you realize) to be centres of devotion and exemplars of surrender ; to keep close to your LORD, fresh in zeal, real in your lives, loyal to your King, unquestionably surrendered, undoubtedly crucified.

The triumph of the Cross rests in the hands of those who are crucified with

CHRIST. It rests with those who know Him and the power of His Resurrection. It rests, above all, with Religious Communities.

So let the fire of the HOLY SPIRIT inspire you; His divine power guide you; His grace infuse into you such desire for allegiance as will enable you to cast out all trace of self-will, and draw you to a full and convincing self-surrender.

Then, beginning with the Religious Communities, the fire will spread and enkindle others; the power will extend beyond your cloistered walls; the grace will be poured forth abundantly: and the world will come to know that in very truth the FATHER hath sent forth His SON to be its Saviour. "We believe and are sure that Thou art the CHRIST, the SON of the living GOD," and, believing, shall have life through His Name.

It was this conviction that gave the Church her conquests in the earliest days of her life. It was not a tepid Peter, a timid Paul, a time-serving Stephen, nor a complacent, self-willed John who won the triumphs for the Cross.

What, then, is needed is not your *works*, but your *being*; not your *gifts*, but *yourselves*.

Then, by the power of the HOLY GHOST, and by co-operation with Him, shall "the

kingdoms of this world become the kingdom of the LORD and of His CHRIST."

And for this you must surrender self to divine love.

### THE END.

Two books are recommended: Law's *Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life* (6d. and 1s. net), and *Modern Christianity a Civilized Heathenism* (Simpkin & Marshall. 1s.).



PRINTED BY A. R. MOWBRAY & CO. LTD.  
LONDON AND OXFORD









TRINITY COLLEGE LIBRARY

[illegible]

